

5

A LETTER

TO THE

Vestry of St. George's, Hanover Square,

ON

SANITARY WORK AND EXPERIENCE

IN

BELGRAVIA.

BY

C. J. B. ALDIS, M.D., M.A. CANTAB, F.R.C.P.,

ONE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH, AND
FORMERLY LECTURER ON MEDICINE, ETC.

LONDON:

RICE'S LIBRARY, 123, MOUNT STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE;

MILAND'S LIBRARY, CHAPEL STREET, BELGRAVE SQUARE;

AND

RASTALL'S, EBURY STREET.

1857.

Price 6d.



A LETTER

TO THE

Vestry of St. George's, Hanover Square,

ON

SANITARY WORK AND EXPERIENCE
IN BELGRAVIA.



Rev. Sir, my Lords, and Gentlemen,

THE present movement in the Vestry, regarding the Medical Officers of Health, renders it necessary for me to give some detailed account of the duties performed by me in the out-wards of the Parish since my appointment. Moreover, a letter having recently been published by Dr. Druitt, in which he states, at page 1, what "they," *i. e.* the Medical Officers, have done, and having participated in no way whatever in that production, I feel compelled, at the eleventh hour, and in a very hurried manner, to bring myself before your notice.

Again, at pages 5 and 6, Dr. Druitt alludes to my name being connected with a Report on Gas Works, and the examination of the water used in the Parish, voluntarily undertaken by both of us last year. But permit me to remind you, as it is not inserted in the letter, that you did me the honour to order my General Report on the Sanitary condition of Belgravia, accompanying a statement of the Analysis of the Water, to be printed. This Report occupied a very considerable amount of time, having been based upon the

instructional minute of the Board of Health, and referred to the mortality, topography, and geological features, elevation, sewerage, baths and wash-houses, model lodging-houses, sanitary observations, sources of disease and their removal, water supply, tabular statement, with map and section of strata of a well at Pimlieo. With the exception of pointing out the general duties of Medical Officers of Health, no further mention is made of what I have done; but in noticing this circumstance, I do not intend to make the slightest charge of any intentional omission on his part; and further, I feel much obliged to him for introducing my name at all, and can easily understand that as he had been suddenly called upon, like myself, to rush into print, that many things were accidentally omitted, which he would, otherwise, have gladly inserted.

On Tuesday, April, 15, 1856, you elected me, by a large majority, one of the Medical Officers of Health, an appointment which I most ardently desired to fill, having for many years previously laboured incessantly in the cause of Sanitary Reform, without fee or reward, until I received this important trust at your hands. In returning you my sincere and hearty thanks, I promised to perform the duties according to the spirit and letter of the law, as laid down in Sir Benjamin Hall's Local Management Act, and it has been my anxious endeavour to carry this into effect.

There is one subject omitted by my colleague, to which it will be necessary to advert before entering into details, viz: — that no regular Inspector of Nuisances was appointed until July 1, 1856. Meanwhile, Mr. Riehman temporarily undertook the office in addition to his other engagements, which being so numerous, I was obliged to act frequently, in order to make any report, in the double capacity of Medical Officer of Health and Inspector of Nuisances, until the above period.

When the Sanitary Committee for Belgravia was appointed at first without an Inspector, the business could not be conducted in that regular and systematic manner, so as to operate as a certain and effectual check upon all those who might otherwise be careless or indifferent in matters which affect the public health. Hence, from May 5th, when our reports commenced, until July 1st, I communicated complaints to the Vestry, the Committee of Works, through Mr. T. B. and Mr. T. H. Chappell, to Mr. Richman, or Mr. Butt, according to circumstances.

Let us now inquire into the nature of this, the first period of my labours, and we shall see how far Sanitary Improvement was needed in the Belgrave sub-district. The first complaint related to a nuisance, which, although situated in Chelsea, nevertheless, was detrimental to the health of many of the inhabitants of St. George's Parish. I allude to several piggeries, containing a great number of pigs, in a place commonly called "Frog Island," at the North East boundary of Chelsea Parish, where the Ranelagh sewer had recently been covered over. The poor inhabitants of this Parish residing near them made loud complaints to me on account of the noise preventing sleep, and stench occasioned, more particularly in warm weather, these evils being aggravated by the vicinity of offensive cow-yards, one of which received refuse from a slaughter-house thrown on the dung heap. Offensive litter from the piggeries was frequently deposited on the pathway, near their dwellings, so that it appeared to be of little use to have covered over the sewer, if such a monster nuisance was permitted to exist. This led to a correspondence with the parochial authorities of Chelsea on the subject, and between Dr. Barelay and myself; and I subsequently attended the Westminster Police Court, at his request, in two cases of nuisance

arising from pigs. But a very few remain now, and these are not allowed to rejoice, as the poet describes, "in black and filthy stagnant water," and their once familiar sounds have nearly ceased to be heard.

I next complained, May 5th, of Middleton's cottages, leading from Neat House Buildings, Ranelagh Road, and reported that—"They consist of five cottages without ventilation behind, and contain ten families with only one privy, which was a cesspool; near it was a tank of water, used for washing, and flowing from a doek situated in front, and at the side of a plot of ground before the cottages. The doek contains filthy water, into which vegetable matter is thrown, and it receives the contents of a water-closet appropriated to the workmen of the candle manufactory adjoining. There is only one water butt. The two washhouses are in a filthy state, and the gullies untrapped. Various epidemic diseases have attacked the inhabitants from time to time, indeed, such a spot may be considered as a complete focus for pestilential diseases." This place was again reported upon by the Inspector and myself until the sanitary defects were remedied; and I may here observe, that having to make fresh complaints and reports, and having considered each as a separate complaint or report, and much having been done prior to the appointment of an Inspector, the figures hereafter brought forward will appear rather large, but I invite a strict scrutiny of my books in case any Vestryman feels disposed to examine them. A great deal, however, of the work is in the possession of Mr. Butt. I may also mention, in order to avoid misunderstanding, that every house in a street reported upon is considered as a distinct complaint.

The two previous complaints, with a report of existing disease, by me, were laid before the Vestry, Tuesday, May 6th, and accompanied a joint Report of Dr. Druitt and myself,

in which it appeared "that we had been actively engaged in communicating with various public authorities and private individuals, for the sake of obtaining information systematically as to the health of the Parish." The results of the Mortuary Registers were then exhibited with the machinery by which, after having visited every public parochial school in the Parish, information might be collected as to the prevalence of sickness. Another complaint, which I noticed in a letter to Mr. Richman, dated May 12, 1857, was of a very painful nature. I was attending a poor man named Harper, residing at No. 6, Commercial Road South, who was in the last stage of consumption. Fever broke out in three of his children, and it also appeared in several other children who resided in the same row of houses. The fever was of a remittent character, accompanied by symptoms of ulceration of the intestines, for one of the children was admitted into St. George's Hospital, under the care of Dr. Wilson, and I read an account of the post-mortem examination in the Hospital Register, wherein it appeared that ulceration of the bowels was detected.

And now let me digress a moment to speak of the awful consequences of fever, which is likely to attack either the brain or lungs, or, as in this fatal case, the intestines, by eating into them, and in some cases actually eating through them; so that fever is not a mere matter of increased heat and thirst, but even without any organic change may destroy life; and it would be well for many in the present day who follow unwholesome trades, being led on by the thirst of gain, to reflect that they have no right to poison a neighbourhood, and thus to swell out its mortality. Fever also attacks the young and strong, the young husband or the young wife, increases the poor-rate, like all zymotic diseases, one of which—cholera—cost this Parish £1500 in six months.

It is to be remembered, that at the end of Commercial Road South, an open space of ground, commonly called "the Shoot," is situated close to the houses in which the above fever prevailed, and will presently be noticed.

In a note dated May 14, 1856, and addressed to Mr. Richman, the following cases, among others, are alluded to. Having been requested to visit Mrs. Childs, residing at No. 6, King Street, I found two of them very ill from fever, in a back room, which was dirty and smelt most offensively. On examining the back yards I observed two dust heaps, and the privy choked up with feculent matter, producing a most disgusting stench; consequently, the window having been opened for ventilation, the children were compelled to inhale a very impure atmosphere. There was no supply of water to the privy, which is open behind from dilapidation, and the water-butt is too small to contain a sufficient quantity of water for the family. Another child was also sickening. At No. 5, in the same street, a very offensive privy was placed close to the parlour and near the street, to the annoyance of passers-by. In remedying the latter evil, a cesspool was detected, which had found an outlet into a baker's oven! next door but one; fortunately another oven was ready for use.

About this time I commenced an inspection of some of the cow-yards, and complained of such as needed improvement.

I then called the attention of the Committee of Works to the want of public water-closets and conveniences for the calls of nature. The want of such accommodation was a serious inconvenience to many, and in some cases dangerous to health, particularly in old people. For the sake of public decency, as well as the public health, I suggested that the subject be taken into consideration, and introduced Mr. W. Austin, C. E., to the Committee, who laid some plans before them for effecting so useful an object, but the matter is

still in abeyance, owing to some impediment; and I will take this opportunity of respectfully inviting the attention of the Vestry again to the subject.

In a communication to the Committee of Works, dated June 10th, 1856, I called their attention to the state of the houses situated on the south side of Robert Street, which have been frequently termed "perfect little hells." The complaints are in the following strain. The water receptacles are open tubs near the privy, which is offensive and without water. Houses in a dirty state, water oozes through the ceiling when it rains, and the ceiling is damp, untrapped gullies, black deposit on the surface of the water.

No. 3. Water cistern close to the privy, which is very offensive and filthy, without water, and not large enough for a full-sized person. There is only one for three houses, containing thirty-two inhabitants.

No. 6. Open water-butt, water covered with a black scum, and containing numerous small red worms, annelidæ, commonly called blood worms; the interior of the water-butt covered with green conferva.

The basements of Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, are without doors, and in a disgraceful condition from the accumulation of dirt.

I may mention that these reports were accompanied by recommendations essential to remedy the evils complained of.

The open waste ground, or shoot, at the extremity of Commercial Road South, which has been previously mentioned, is also brought before their notice. It is stated that a quantity of night-soil, with other decomposing animal and vegetable matter, has been frequently deposited there. I subsequently ascertained that this abominable practice was continued, and that all kinds of filth were brought from Westminster and Chelsea to be thrown down in the same place.

There was also much stagnant water, containing dead dogs, occasioning an offensive smell. A watchman was appointed at my suggestion, to prevent the deposit of night-soil, lime was strewed over some parts, and the ponds filled. The Government has recently made two new roads, which have already much improved the sanitary condition of this locality.

Among the odours of London, those emitted in rag shops, or the houses of marine-store dealers, are about the most dangerous. Such pestiferous spots contain fat of the worst description, which certain cooks have carefully collected until it becomes rancid, or almost unbearable, in their masters' houses, then they sell it at these places, where it is kept and produces one of the vilest stinks imaginable. Besides this, a dreadful smell proceeds from accumulated bones, which may be perceived through the gratings of the area by pedestrians, "scenting the morning air," should the cellar door be left open. Again, the musty smell from filthy rags, old clothes closely packed in the front shop and back parlour, where perhaps some of the family sleep, may, altogether, produce what has been termed a "deadly smell," particularly after the house is closed at night, and every kind of ventilation stopped. But this is not all; the fat remains to be sold, not such fat as that used by respectable wholesale houses, which, during the melting process is endurable compared with the most offensive grease sold by the marine-store dealer. The method of selling it requires notice. The purchaser's open cart arrives with open tubs containing "kitchen stuff," which offends the noses of the neighbours who may be at breakfast with open windows. The cart may remain half-an-hour or more while the fat is being carefully *scraped* from one tub into another to prevent imposition—in case the seller should have added other ingredients in order to increase the weight.

I need scarcely say, that the seraping out of these rich morsels from one receptacle into another augments the nuisance immensely.

Now questions may arise, do these places require improving in order to check the evil or do they not? and this is only one out of many plague spots. I believe that the most inveterate anti-sanitary reformer, should he have slept in the back parlour described above, would expect to wake the next morning with headache, nausea, and loss of appetite; or if he remained longer and suffered from fever, would think it very hazardous to continue there, and would not be surprised at finding two children dead from a most malignant form of measles, as I did in the back room on the first floor at a marine-store dealer's in Belgravia, in June last, for it is not an imaginary ease. The bones were ordered to be taken away immediately and removed more frequently, and the place cleansed and lime-whited, and the remainder of the family lodging there persuaded to quit the premises. With such dens as these we cannot be surprised at epidemic diseases becoming more virulent, or that the inhabitants, generally, suffer from what Sir James Clark has appropriately termed the London Cachexia, or bad habit of body, and need a restoration in change of air, which, to do them justice, even despisers of sanitary reform seek, and endeavour to avoid town malaria by sleeping in the country.

Many of the Vestry cannot be aware of the amount of sanitary work which has been accomplished in the Belgrave sub-district, for I report to the Sanitary Committee appointed over this district, who, being the local authority, carry into effect such improvements as are necessary, and only make extracts from my Reports to be submitted to the Committee of Works upon important matters, such as the construction of sewers, some of which have been effected, I am happy to say,

at my instigation, and a similar recommendation is now before the latter Committee for placing a new sewer along Avery Farm Row, forming the East side of Ebury Square, which is deficient of one throughout its whole extent, allowing cess-pools to remain, and preventing the houses from being drained. This may form a third reason for addressing you.

But to return to the smells which are not perfect nose-gays. Meat unfit for human food has been detected, and the Inspector with myself seized 140 lbs. of such meat which was being made into sausages, and we obtained a conviction of the offender from Mr. Arnold, the magistrate. How can it be otherwise? Good meat from the clod-part of the shoulder is sold at four-pence a pound to respectable pork butchers, and yet others sell beef sausages at the same price, and keep, perhaps, two men to make them. How can they derive a profit unless very inferior meat is purchased, to be mixed with bread moistened with water, and sometimes coloured with red ochre or blood, and sophisticated with seasoning; so that the poor man little imagines when the sausages are frying in the pan, the gravy may consist of water, or the oozings from putrid meat stained with red ochre!

Now the occupation of your Medical Officers is not a very healthy one, for if small-pox breaks out they must examine the house in which it appeared at once, and recommend remedial measures, if required; or if cholera, or any other epidemic disease breaks out, their services are needed to endeavour to stem the pestilence. Now these diseases are generally most prolific in the autumn, when many seek the refreshing air of the country, or invigorating breezes of the sea-side, while the Medical Officer of Health must be near at hand to check their progress.

On May 8th last, small-pox occurred in Eccleston Place, where I found seven cases in one family. I visited another

family in the same place, and examined five children laid up with the complaint; I was also occupied, at different times, in ferreting out such cases until June, when it began to subside, besides recommending sanitary measures, and communicating with the Schoolmaster of St. Michael's Schools with respect to the Vaccination of the children, and with the Medical men who attended the cases. I feel happy in laying before you the following letter received from Mr. Bell, who called my attention to its existence, which at least shows the utility of an Officer of Health.

43, Upper Belgrave Place,
8th June, 1857.

Dear Sir,

When the small-pox was so extremely prevalent in our district last year, I claimed your assistance, feeling assured its malignity was to be traced to families who would not allow their children to be vaccinated. You kindly and immediately afforded me the assistance I asked, and to your zeal I think we are mainly indebted to the disease having been arrested. I am sure you will be happy to learn we have been but little troubled by it this year; and we have had only two or three children refused admittance to our schools from not having been vaccinated, and these were persons recently arrived in London, and who took their children directly to have them vaccinated.

I am, dear Sir,

Dr. Aldis,

Chester Terrace,

Chester Square.

Yours very truly,

T. W. BELL.

In August, some cases of Cholera occurred, three of which very much resembled malignant Cholera, in St. George's Place. The disease also manifested itself in rather a severe

form at No. 5, Grosvenor Cottages, but it was promptly attended to without any fatal result; and every house in both places underwent thorough sanitary inspection and improvement. Many of the tenements were in a most disgraceful condition, particularly Ely Cottages, which were condemned by me, and pulled down.

The trapping of gullies, examination of the water at the plunge bath and in the district, overcrowding and smoke nuisances, although the latter do not come under my immediate province, have occupied a considerable share of time and attention. Mr. Thomas Cundy has also placed the Grosvenor Canal and Basin under my control; for it was proposed to let off the water from them in July, which I prevented, thinking it would be a dangerous proceeding, more especially as it was hot weather, and the small-pox having so recently shown itself, it appeared to be more prudent to postpone the operation until a colder season.

You may readily believe that some of the cases have occupied considerable time. Take, for instance, the prosecution of the Cow-keeper in Ebury Street. I reported upon it several times, after numerous visits, and was examined by the Committee of Works regarding the nature of my evidence, upon which they determined to try the question; and a lengthened hearing of the case took place before Mr. Paynter at the Westminster Police Court, who decided in favour of the Vestry, so that it occasioned many beneficial results to the district; for several of the Cow-keepers, in a praiseworthy manner, drained and improved the sheds to such an extent as will, no doubt, ultimately be profitable to themselves, the public at large, as well as the animals. An association was immediately formed among themselves, and Mr. Dexter presided on one occasion, when he explained, according to a morning paper, the principles upon which the association was based, which appeared to be excellent;—

they inculcated a daily, thorough cleansing of the sheds and cattle, a removal of any cause or pretext for complaints, and the avoidance of accumulated manure, &c.

There are no less than twelve establishments of this kind in Belgravia: (1) Mr. Dexter, Kinnerton Street; (2) Mr. Green, Eaton Row; (3) Mr. Griffiths, 16, Upper Ranelagh Street; (4 and 5) Mr. Hatt, 15, Brewer Street and Eccleston Street East; (6) Mr. Leach, Prince's Row; (7) Mr. H. Wise, 17, Elizabeth Street; (8) Mr. Thomas Wise, Westbourne Street; (9) Mr. W. Vickers, Graham Street West; (10) Mr. Prett, Royal Oak Place; (11) Mr. Smith, Whitaker Street; (12) Mr. Bull, Commercial Road South. A magistrate's order is out against one of them; a notice has been served upon the owners of two others to drain, pave, &c., which they have already agreed to execute. These cow-yards contain thirty-five sheds, of which I have obtained the length, width, height, and cubic capacities, with the condition of each cow-house. I also accompanied Mr. Richman to Smith's dairy, near Farringdon Market, to Laycock's at Islington, and to Friern Manor Farm, at Peckham Rye, in order to take notes as to the structural arrangements of cow-sheds, upon which he founded a very useful report, which was read to the Committee of Works.

Permit me here to state, that when I undertook the appointment of Officer of Health, that I intended to carry out the law fearlessly and without dread of consequences, if persuasive measures and ordinary means should have failed; and I am glad to state, that the first, or friendly notice, has generally sufficed, the compulsory cases having been exceedingly few; but where it is requisite to issue summonses an angry feeling is produced, which, however, would never prevent me from doing my duty in endeavouring to raise the public health to a maximum standard.

In July last I arranged some Tabular Forms for Sanitary

Returns of inspections and recommendations, with a Mortality Table, which were approved by the Sanitary Committee, and since that period I have sent in a Report every fortnight, with a Tabular Form of recommendations, filled up, in addition to the joint monthly Report and Mortality Table, to the Vestry.

I find that since my appointment on April 15, 1856, to the present time, the number of cases reported upon by me in the Out-wards, amount to at least 573, and probably more, exclusive of much correspondence.

The following is an extract from one of my Reports to the Sanitary Committee, dated July 14, 1856. "I have also, in compliance with the wishes of the Committee, pointed out to the Inspector, several places in the district requiring sanitary improvement, and our Reports are now brought before you with the Tabular Forms which I recommended to the Committee for the present, and which met with their concurrence, until the association of Officers of Health had fully considered the matter."

I have, also, without exception, visited every case in which a personal application was made to me, and, as a general rule, have visited the cases which the Inspector has brought before my notice. The weekly return also of existing Disease to the Board of Health, — (1) From the Workhouse, Little Chelsea; (2) Out-patient paupers; (3) St. George's Hospital; (4) Royal Pimlico Dispensary; (5) St. Paul's and St. Barnabas' Dispensary, occupies some little time, and I am glad to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Godrich, Sen., Mr. Griffith, and Mr. E. Davis, for their very kind assistance.

About this time it became necessary for me to examine the Slaughter-houses in Belgravia, twenty-five in number, which was followed by very beneficial results. It was necessary to close some as unfit for slaughtering, others were

thoroughly cleansed, drained, and ventilated, others were in a satisfactory condition ; and I feel bound to say, that in every instance, the butchers received the visits of the Inspector and myself in a most civil manner, and readily carried out every suggestion ; and, above all, the poor continue to receive them with marked pleasure and satisfaction.

To show sceptical persons that the Reports of your Medical Officers may be attended with some advantage, I quote the following from one addressed to the Vestry in September : “ and four cases of persons drowned in the Serpentine, three of them accidentally, whilst bathing,” upon which some member immediately moved, that a communication be made to Sir Benjamin Hall, calling his attention to the subject ; but for this statement, the member would never have heard of the deaths.

Sometimes a house may be newly erected, and yet be subject to a serious nuisance. A complaint was made to me in October last relative to one in Kinnerton Street, which I immediately visited, and found a pool of sewage water in the back yard, and sewage-matter under the ground floor, a foot in depth, emitting a dreadfully offensive stench, in consequence of the drain not communicating with the sewer, which was a private one. Scarlet fever broke out in the family, who had recently removed from another residence, rendered intolerable through the smell of cow dung.

It is a part of our duty to examine into noxious trades and manufactories, as well as to make analyses. I have sent in a Report upon the gas works in the district, to the Sanitary Committee, and have analysed the sandy deposit in sewers, as well as the soil in one of the cow-yards, which was saturated with organic matter to the depth of fifteen inches below the surface.

From my Reports it appears, that I visited No. 7, Little Ebury Street, in October last. It consisted of one room, oc-

occupied by a married couple, and is used for selling fish, which is cooked there. It is without a privy, or drainage; the slops and washings of fish are emptied into the gully-hole in Ebury Street. The room is dirty and out of repair, allowing the rain to enter through the ceiling. The entrails of fish are kept in a basket in the room with dust for the scavengers to carry away. It is unfit for human habitation. There is neither yard nor back ventilation.

It was gratifying to report at the same time, the improvement which had taken place in the houses in Robert Street, before alluded to, which had been converted, through the agency of the local authority, from wretched dens into cleanly and decent habitations.

In November I visited the residence of a Medical practitioner in consequence of a complaint, and observed his wash-house to be damp from an obstructed drain. It was occasioned by a privy without water, into which shavings had been thrown, situated in premises behind, and communicating with the above drain. The occupier having paid £5 11s. 8d. only in the previous March, on account of a similar impediment, was anxious for a remedy on the present occasion, otherwise, should obstructions occur about every six months, they would be equivalent to an increase of rent of £12 9s. 4d. The evil was cured by compelling the offending party to provide a separate drain to communicate with the sewer.

The following extract is taken from one of my reports dated December 1st, 1856: "I would also direct your particular attention to Eaton Row, which I inspected on Saturday, where there are five stables, the upper parts of which have been generally occupied, and are without privy accommodation, or even a sewer to receive drainage.

"One cannot help expressing great disgust at such a

state of things, and yet it is met with even in this aristocratic neighbourhood. Several stables have been erected, without any intention of their becoming inhabited, too near the houses. I now allude to stables connected with the smaller houses, and not to those where proper rooms have been provided for a coachman and family to reside in. After a short time the former are let to cabmen, without water closets, but, when constructed, they are generally placed in the loft, where meals are taken, and cesspools have followed as a matter of course. Disease is frequently engendered in such places, and I should be happy to see them prohibited from being used as dwellings. The noise occasioned by the kicking of horses, and the return of night cabmen, frequently prevent the residents of houses in front of them from enjoying their proper sleep. The only plan, however, to be adopted, at present, is to enforce sanitary regulations." A drain was subsequently laid down in Eaton Row; and after I reported, in December, that Gregory Street was without a sewer, the Vestry resolved upon one being constructed.

It is also reported in the same month, that "having heard that fever existed at No. 4, Eaton Cottages, I visited the patient on December 28th, and found it to be a case of typhus fever, with mulberry rash, in a man aged 23, who occupied a small back room with his mother, a widow, (whose husband had died from cholera,) and two other children, one of which was ailing. The illness appeared to have arisen from destitution in Chelsea, and I procured medicine from the St. Paul and St. Barnabas' Dispensary, and gave a certificate for parochial relief, which was obtained, as well as other supplies from a district visitor, until he was able to be removed into St. George's Hospital, where he recovered. I recommended this step to be taken as soon as practicable, fearing the disease might spread, as the house was overcrowded."

I also suggested lodging houses for the poor, and a committee was appointed for the purpose of carrying them into effect.

The Inspector and myself paid at least twenty visits to a house in Chapel Street, to detect the cause of a smell. At one time neighbours were suspected, at another dead rats, and the drains of two houses were examined, but to no purpose. The nuisance occasioned a loss of £7 weekly to the owner. At length an uncovered leaden box, connected with the water pipe, which communicated with the drain, was discovered. This open box was on a level with the floor of the front parlour, and allowed the smell to enter between the boards into the room. The box was covered, the water pipe trapped, and the smell disappeared.

On one occasion scarlet fever broke out, at an orphanage, but by prompt attention and removal of those not infected to an empty house, kindly lent by Mr. Newson, the progress of the disease was prevented.

Sometimes rate-payers have consulted me regarding the removal of the dead, but I have no official power in such cases; and if I had, it ought to be used only with great discretion, allowing every consideration for the affection of relatives. But I have succeeded in obtaining, by persuasion, an earlier burial of the body than was intended, when delay might have proved hazardous to the living.

Now for the assertion of some, "that Medical Officers of Health have not been required in St. George's Hanover Square," I think that my colleague has fully proved his case as far the blessed spots in Hanover Square and May Fair are concerned; in regard to Belgravia, I hope to have done the same; but should they doubt, let them apply to the clergy, upon whose sanitary committees I acted in two districts prior to the appointment of Sanitary Officers, or the laity,

medical and otherwise, who co-operated in the good work. Again, if they are so strong-minded as to resist such evidence, let them consult the kind district visitors; or appeal to the widows and orphans, whose husbands and parents have been suddenly stricken down by the cholera, which, in 1854, destroyed 341 persons; or let them visit the back slums and courts, or the cow-shed where the animals are so huddled together that they can scarcely use their tails, provided by nature to brush away the flies, a fact sufficient to startle the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."

My colleague has explained the manner in which we carefully examine the statistics. In my general report you are aware that this part of our duties was fully entered into when alluding to epidemic invasions. It also appeared, in calculating the deaths from all causes, that during twenty-five weeks, including the autumnal months, and excluding the non-parishioners who died in St. George's Hospital, that the relative mortality of the Belgrave, to Hanover and May Fair wards, was equivalent to three to two per annum. Then I had data for only twenty-five weeks; since, however, I find, that, during thirteen weeks, ending March 28, 1856, the deaths in the Hanover and May Fair wards amounted to 137, but in the Belgrave, after deducting fifty-six non-parishioners, to 150, the proportion in Belgravia having diminished as epidemics decreased during the winter season.

From a return just made to me, for the week ending May 30, the deaths for this district amounted to only six, two being those of non-parishioners, reducing the number to only four, the lowest on record since the passing of the Registration Act. It would be fallacious to attribute such a very favourable result entirely to sanitary improvement, for the public health, generally, is favourable; but I believe that the mortality might have been greater had sanitary measures been

neglected, and that, by the removal of numerous nuisances, we are better prepared for any emergency.

While collecting evidence upon the existence of disease, I found that in 1855, Allington Street, Brewer Street, Eccleston Place, Eccleston Street East, Flask Row, Hindon Street, Robert's Buildings, St. George's Row, and Spring Gardens, were very prolific in the number of sick persons, and that Eccleston Place alone furnished two practitioners with 123 cases at the Pimlico Dispensary. Mr. Edgecumbe also, attended forty-nine patients in 1854, and the same number of cases in 1856 in the same street, and belonging to the same Institution. It appears also from a Street List which I am forming, that certain streets produce more deaths than others, a circumstance which has caused me to direct particular attention to those where the mortality was excessive.

The question of Public Health is one of the highest importance, and no opposition ought to prevail against it. If neglected it causes pauperism, degeneracy—physical and moral—fills our hospitals and dispensaries, drives people to the public house, and wastes the precious energies of life.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful servant,

C. J. B. ALDIS, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health,

Chester Terrace, Chester Square.

The Vestry of St. George's,

Hanover Square,

June 11, 1857.

The following is a List of the names of streets, number of houses in each, except a few trifling cases, where sanitary work has been done, and notices served in the Belgrave Sub-District, between July 13, 1856, and June 11, 1857.

Robert Street, Commercial Road	-	22
Brewer Street	- - - -	15
Ebury Gardens	- - - -	4
King's Street	- - - -	10
Prince's Row	- - - -	7
Lower Eaton Street	- - - -	4
Eaton Lane North, and Courts	- -	20
Upper Belgrave Place	- - -	3
Eccleston Street East	- - -	20
Eccleston Place	- - - -	4
Walker's Buildings	- - -	4
May's Yard	- - - -	1
King's Arms Passage	- - -	3
Kinnerton Street	- - - -	5
St. George's Row	- - - -	32
Upper Ranelagh Street	- - - -	1
Commercial Road, and turnings	-	27
Graham Street	- - - -	4
Elizabeth Street	- - - -	6
Eaton Yard	- - - -	11
Newland Street	- - - -	1
Stockbridge Terrace	- - -	7
Belgrave Buildings	- - - -	5
Grosvenor Cottages	- - - -	14
Little Ebury Street	- - - -	3
St. George's Place	- - - -	15
Carried forward -		248

Brought forward	-	-	248
Clifford's Row	-	-	2
Middleton's Cottages	-	-	5
Grosvenor Row	-	-	6
Flask Row	-	-	13
Queen Street	-	-	9
Cutmore's Buildings	-	-	8
Vauxhall Road	-	-	1
Warwick Street	-	-	3
Eaton Lane South	-	-	2
Upper Ebury Street	-	-	8
Ebury Street	-	-	1
Ranelagh Street	-	-	1
Eaton Row	-	-	13
Hart's Yard			
Skinner's Place	-	-	3
Chester Cottages	-	-	4
Skinners Street	-	-	12
Ranelagh Mews	-	-	4
Skinners Cottages	-	-	2
Whitaker Street	-	-	1
Coleshill Street	-	-	4
Belgrave Cottages	-	-	12
Ranelagh Grove	-	-	2
Belgrave Buildings	-	-	4
Shaftesbury Terrace	-	-	1
St. George's Terrace	-	-	4
Spring Gardens	-	-	14
Eaton Row	-	-	13
Hindon Street and Place, and Gray's Inn Place	-	-	85
Carried forward	-	-	485

Brought forward	-	-	-	-	485
Nell Gwynne Cottages	-	-	-	-	4
Eliza Place	-	-	-	-	6
Gregory Street and Place	-	-	-	-	15
Ranelagh Place	-	-	-	-	1
New Grosvenor Place	-	-	-	-	23
Union Street	-	-	-	-	8
Westbourne Street	-	-	-	-	17
Belgrave Mews	-	-	-	-	1
Allington Street and Place	-	-	-	-	19
Wilton Road	-	-	-	-	2
Westbourne Place	-	-	-	-	2
Bridge Row	-	-	-	-	2
Erin Place	-	-	-	-	1
Chapel Street	-	-	-	-	1
Warrard's Court					
Robert's Buildings	-	-	-	-	2
Ebury Square, Avery Farm Row, and turnings	-	-	-	-	30
Total	-	-	-	-	619

J. GRANT,

Inspector of Nuisances.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY GEORGE PHIPPS, RANELAGH STREET. EATON SQUARE.

Just Published, Second Edition, Price 1s.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

General Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Belgrave Sub-district, Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, and on the Quality of the Waters used therein. Printed by order of the Vestry, January 6th, 1857.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“ Dr. Aldis’s Report on the Sanitary condition of the Belgrave Sub-district, will be found very useful by practitioners in that locality. It contains a great deal of information on the geological features, elevation, sewerage, and water supply of the district, with observations on the sources of disease and their removal.”—*Medical Times and Gazette*, January 24th, 1857.

“ This is another of the able Reports on the sanitary conditions of the various districts of the metropolis.”—*Medical Circular*, Feb. 11th, 1857.

“ From these extracts it will be seen, that Dr. Aldis’s Report is one of very considerable value.”—*Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, Jan. 31st, 1857.

RICE’s Library, 123, Mount Street, MILAND’s, Chapel Street,
and RASTALL’s, Ebury Street.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A Clinical Report on Fever and various Diseases of the Head, Chest, and Abdomen; being an Introduction to Hospital Practice.

“ The principles and practice recommended in the work are worthy of adoption.”—*Medical and Surgical Journal*.

“ A very useful publication.”—*Literary Gazette*.

London : LONGMAN & Co.

